

metro

COLD CASE

Technology comes through for Farah family

Story, B-2



Cummer Museum receives \$4 million gift

By Charlie Patton
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A Jacksonville native who became a New York-based banker and manufacturer has given the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens \$4 million to endow the currently unfilled position of executive director.

The new executive director will be known as the George W. and Kathleen I. Gibbs Executive Director. The Gibbs were the grandparents of Dudley D. Johnson. Johnson's The Disoway

Foundation of New York is giving the money, the second-largest donation since the Cummer opened in 1961.

Having an endowment that should generate proceeds of 4 to 5 percent annually — \$160,000 to \$200,000 a year — is “bound to have an impact” on job candidates as the Cummer conducts a search for a new executive director, said Ryan Schwartz, chair of the Cummer's board of trustees. “A gift of this nature underscores the value individuals place on the museum and establishes a height-

ened level of prominence for our executive director's position both locally and throughout the art world.”

Nina Waters, president of the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, said the donation is “unusual” because of its size and because “typically private philanthropy doesn't fund staff. Gifts that size are more often for brick and mortar. It's a remarkable gift.”

Gibbs was both an inventor and a Jacksonville shipbuilder, founding the Gibbs Gas Engine

Company at the age of 24 in 1908 on Jacksonville's Southbank after inventing a two-cycle gas engine twice as efficient as those of his competitors.

Soon he began building ships and what would be renamed the Gibbs Corp. eventually occupied a long stretch of the Southbank, from the Main Street bridge to the site currently occupied by the Wyndham Hotel. The shipyard built some 220 vessels, including Navy warships, and overhauled many others before Gibbs sold it in 1962. At its peak during World

War II it employed about 2,000 people.

Gibbs also operated a ferry line across the St. Johns in downtown Jacksonville and made plans to replace it with a toll bridge before the city built the Main Street bridge in 1941.

Kathleen Gibbs, who was Gibbs' childhood sweetheart, was the daughter of James Edmondson Ingraham. He spent much of his career working for Florida railroad tycoons Henry

MUSEUM continues on B-6

Councilman wants to remove term limits

By Christopher Hong
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A Jacksonville City Councilman wants to ask voters to abolish term limits on his office and other local positions that were overwhelmingly approved by voters more than 25 years ago.



Schellenberg

Councilman Matt Schellenberg says the 8-year limit forces experienced officials out of local office just as they're beginning to hit their stride.

“It's a detriment to the areas we represent,” he said. “When I walk out the door after 8 years, I have all the knowledge and contacts... you wouldn't do that with any business person. You'd keep the most experienced person in the job.”

Schellenberg has introduced legislation to hold a referendum in August 2018 asking voters if they wanted to keep the two four-year term limits on the council, the city's constitutional offices, like the sheriff and supervisor of elections, and the Duval County School Board. If passed, the new rule would apply to current officials.

Schellenberg, who will be forced out of office by term limits in 2019, has long been interested in removing them.

Last year, he introduced a similar plan to ask voters to increase the limit to three four-year terms. However, he withdrew his legislation, saying he didn't want it to interfere with Mayor Lenny Curry's half-cent sales tax referendum to pay off the city's pension debt.

With Curry's pension reform plan approved, Schellenberg refocused his attention on rolling back the term limits that voters approved in 1991 with 82 percent support.

SCELLENBERG continues on B-2

RAINY WEATHER



Michael Fierro (from left) and his twins Michael and Elizabeth, 5, make their way through a deluge in San Marco on their way to lunch on Wednesday. (Photos by Will Dickey/Florida Times-Union)



City workers check storm drains during a downpour in San Marco on Wednesday.

Funding cut results in fewer kids at summer camp

By Tessa Duvall
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Several city council members say they are concerned about a recent overhaul of summer camp funding that will ultimately result in fewer kids being served.

Discussions about revamping summer camp and after-school programs have been taking place for more than a year, and the boards that oversee those city dollars have been immersed in the details of that discussion for months.

In January, the Jacksonville Children's Commission, after hours of input from service providers, voted in favor of paying more per child for summer camp and after-school programming even though overall there wouldn't be more money available. The goal was to increase the quality of programs while accepting the trade-off that fewer kids would ultimately be served with the same fund of nearly \$12 million.

All told, there will be 2,458 fewer kids in camp this summer than in summer 2016. According to commission numbers, there will be 2,860 kids — 33 percent fewer than last year — in commission camps, and 1,180 kids in Jax Journey camps — 46 percent fewer than the previous year. Jax Journey camps are paid for with commission dollars, but are managed by a separate oversight committee that chose to fund its programs at an even higher level.

The funding for these programs was only finalized in recent days after two rounds of competitive bidding that was, at times, contentious. When the results became public, some non-profits, including giants like Communities in Schools and the Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida, were left with fewer dollars than in past years and locations that once

CAMP continues on B-6

Why it's always better to talk than to conversate

ST. SIMONS ISLAND | I've switched my satellite radio back to bluegrass, and I feel better.

Radio when I travel is an escape, but I sometimes make the mistake of listening to alleged news programs and I get angry. It's not what they say but how they say it.

I was listening to one of those Georgia Public Broadcasting shows a couple weeks ago and the pundits were talking about the upcoming runoff for a seat in the U.S. House between Democrat Jon Ossoff and Republican Karen Handel.

A woman Democratic operative asserted that

Donald Trump's presidency “incent” Democratic and independent voters to turn out and vote for Ossoff. I looked up incent in my aging Websters New World College Dictionary. Old dictionaries are the best because they don't have the newest words.

Unlike the word ain't, incent ain't in there. And if it was included, it wouldn't be a verb. Incentive is an actual word, a noun, and incense is in Webster's as a verb meaning “to make very angry.” I can use it in a sentence. People who say incents incense me, nearly as much as those who say incentivize. (Note: I'm not

sure that's spelled right because it's not in the aforementioned dictionary.)



Terry Dickson

It's not just making up words or babbling buzzwords, there's a laziness to it and an assumption that the listener will somehow be impressed.

Take those warnings on TV ads for prescription drugs. A side effect of many, we are told, is tiredness. I may have said

fatigue, but what if it goes beyond simple fatigue or tiredness? Is it extreme tiredness or exhaustion?

I heard a guy on radio talking about uncomfortableness. It takes a lot of energy to dredge up a six-syllable nonexistent word when the three in discomfort will do.

I was trolling channels this week when someone on Chip and Joanna Gaines' “Fixer Upper” show referred to something as “very unique.” This one bothers me, for some reason.

I never knew there were degrees of uniquity because I was sure unique

meant one of a kind. It is also defined as, “having no like or equal; unparalleled.” So if something is very unique, does it go beyond one of a kind to 1.375 of a kind?

The dictionary also included “highly unusual, extraordinary, rare, etc.: a common usage still objected to by some.”

“By some” means there are others who share my view. Good. I was starting to think my objection was unique.

Sometimes, people make up words because of the setting: They want to appear highly intelligent and/or educated to the

point that they eschew the monosyllabic for the polysyllabic.

Apparently court is one of those settings because more than once, I've heard people testify, “We were conversating, when...”

When what, you ask. Sometimes it's when his wife emerged from the darkness with a 12 gauge.

It's always better to talk than to conversate.

I admit I sometimes choose the wrong word, but it's usually my fingers that make the mistake. One of my favorite times was when a fellow journalist

DICKSON continues on B-2

Technology comes through in 1974 cold case

Farah family members relieved to learn of arrest after 43 years

By Dan Scanlan
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Bobby Farah was a child when his father was shot and killed May 22, 1974, in an attempted armed robbery at his Jacksonville grocery store.

As decades rolled by, the son, three sisters and Freddie Farah's widow wondered if the killer would ever be found.

That wait has ended as Sheriff Mike Williams confirmed Wednesday that last week's murder arrest of iconic New Orleans street performer Johnnie Miller, known as "Uncle Louie," is indeed for his father's case. The Times-Union and Jacksonville.com have been detailing the case since Friday, but the Sheriff's Office had said it wasn't ready to comment.

Standing with family and the cold case squad that reopened the case, Farah's son thanked them for the arrest 43 years after his father died. He said the family was relieved, never thinking this day would come.

"To be honest with you, I wasn't totally shocked," the son said at the news conference. "But I just always had this feeling that someone was out there that was responsible and I wanted to find out who that person was."

Turning to Freddie Farah's widow, Nadia Farah, her son and three daughters, Williams offered condolences.

"Your sorrow can't be mended, but I hope this news can bring you some peace," Williams said.

Miller, who lived in Jacksonville, would have been

17 at the time of Farah's death. The gunman entered the store as Farah, his uncle and a 14-year-old female customer were there, the sheriff said. He came to the counter with items like he was going to buy them, then pulled a gun and demanded money. Farah "swiped at the gun" and was shot in the head.

Fingerprints were found on a box of cake mix and a can of frosting left behind, but no match could be made in 1974 through the early Automated Fingerprint Identification System, Williams said. Those fingerprints were re-examined in 1998 as part of a cold case review, but no match was found again. Then in December the Sheriff's Office's cold case team did another review and decided it had potentially to be solved. Miller was

identified due to major improvements in fingerprint system, along with help from the now 57-year-old female witness, Williams said.

"Think of a black-and-white TV and a color TV, then HDTV. It's that type of process in terms of technology improving over the years," Williams said.

Jacksonville investigators worked with New Orleans police and tracked down Miller after his former landlord identified him as a well-known French Quarter entertainer, Williams said. Now 60, Miller remains in a New Orleans jail nearly a week after police picked him up on an out-of-state warrant for murder and attempted armed robbery.

Williams said his department has had success recently applying upgraded



Jacksonville Sheriff Mike Williams (center) confirms the arrest of Johnnie Miller in the 1974 homicide of Freddie Farah, flanked on his right by Farah family members and on his left with the Sheriff's Office's cold case squad. (Dan Scanlan/Florida Times-Union)

technology and more investigative footwork to old cases to "bring some sort of justice" to victims' families. That includes the January kidnapping arrest of Gloria Bolden Williams, 18 years after newborn Kamiyah Mobley was taken from what is now UF Health Jacksonville and moved to South

Carolina. And in March, Ronnie Leon Hyde was arrested in Jacksonville in the death of 16-year-old Fred Paul Laster, found dismembered and headless in mid-1994 behind a gas station in Columbia County, police said.

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Residents frustrated after Gate building permit appeal denied by city

By Tiffanie Reynolds
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Atlantic Beach City Attorney Brenna Durden denied an appeal by four Atlantic Beach residents protesting the building permit of Gate Petroleum's proposed gas station on 501 Atlantic Blvd.

Glenn Shuck, Nancy DeCandis, Lorraine Smith and Elizabeth Cosgrove appealed the building permit's approval Friday.

All four residents are requesting that their appeal be heard and discussed in a public hearing with city officials. The city approved the permit in early May.

They argue that if the gas station is built and opened as currently stands it will have a severe negative impact on their daily lives and property. All four live directly behind or next to the proposed gas station.

In the appeal, they argued the building permit should be revoked because the 24/7 hours of operation isn't under permitted uses of commercial general districts in Atlantic Beach under section 24-49 in the



Atlantic Beach residents continue to oppose construction of a Gate gas station in their neighborhood. (Bruce Lipsky/Florida Times-Union)

city's code of ordinances. They said in the appeal that it's addressed directly in section 24-111 (b) in the city code, as it lists "excessive traffic, noise, light or extremely late hours of operation" as non-permitted uses of commercial property.

Durden said in a response letter sent Tuesday that section 24-49 doesn't provide for a right to appeal to the city and denied their public hearing request. She said that all decisions regarding Chapter 24 of the Land Development

Regulations were made by former Community Development Director Jeremy Hubsch and upheld by the city commission in a 14-hour hearing on the gas station in May 2016 and by the circuit court after an appeal.

In October, Durden told Atlantic Beach city commissioners that Gate's request to be open 24/7 was approved through a letter sent to former Chief of Police Micheal Deal, which he signed.

Gate Petroleum Attorney T.R. Hainline argued

that the gas station should be allowed to operate 24/7 because they will close alcohol sales between 2 a.m. and 7 a.m.

Durden said that Deal and former City Manager Nelson Van Liere accepted the argument because other businesses in Atlantic Beach are open past 2 a.m. or open before 7 a.m.

Shuck said Durden's response rekindled the neighbors' opposition. He's hired an attorney and is discussing their options.

"We're upset. We're frustrated that we were promised a year ago that we would address hours of operation at a time to be determined," said Shuck. "And then the city attorney, on her own, cut a deal with T.R. Hainline, once again ignoring our code and ordinances."

His argument will focus on the city improperly establishing the gas station's 24/7 hour of operation and that the station shouldn't be built on the proposed site. He feels that the city is ignoring some of its own code to allow round-the-clock operation.

Smith agrees, and feels that the city has ignored her and other neighbors' concerns throughout the

gas station's permitting and application process.

"I think it's totally unacceptable that Atlantic Beach hasn't protected us," said Smith. "They're letting Gate do absolutely what they want. We've got codes to protect the citizens and the neighborhoods across from there (gas station site), and they're just violating our rights as far as the code of Atlantic Beach."

SCHELLENBERG

Continued from B-1

The success of the 1991 referendum was driven by a widespread belief that council members, free to serve as many terms as they were elected, had become too powerful to be driven out of office by voters. It also rode the coat-tails of a broader movement to impose term limits on other elected offices in Florida, like Congress and the state legislature.

Despite the strong support for the referendum, a 2015 report released by a local task force looking to improve Jacksonville's city government contained a list of recommendations that included increasing the limit to three terms. The report said the city "suffers a significant loss of

continuity, momentum and institutional knowledge" every four years because of significant turnover of elected officials.

"It's a 25-year experiment. After 25 years, it appears it has not been beneficial to Jacksonville," Schellenberg said.

Schellenberg acknowledged that public confidence in politicians today is low — he says he's "very disappointed in my elected officials" — but he's confident voters have a realistic chance to fire their elected officials every four years.

He also said term limits have diluted the competitiveness of local elections. He said qualified candidates often are averse to running against incumbents and instead wait to run for an open seat.

It's not clear how his plan will fare among council members. Schellenberg's previous legislation had a moderate degree of support before he withdrew it, although some colleagues said they didn't support removing the limits.

His current legislation will be reviewed and voted on as early as next month.

If it passes, Schellenberg didn't have many details to share when asked how he planned to convince voters.

"Just because you think it's hard to pass doesn't mean you don't do it," he said. "All I'm trying to do is make Jacksonville a better place... I'll be glad to go wherever (voters) want me to go. I think people will understand."

DICKSON

Continued from B-1

called from Glasgow, Scotland, asking if I had pictures from an event. I did not, and in telling him so, I stumbled. I apologized for

"slaughtering the Queen's English."

"I'm Scottish," he said. "I don't give a damn about the Queen nor her English." Apparently, we have a lot of Scottish people in this country.

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